

APPLICANT'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE CURRENT CONDITION OF THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (previously amended). A vehicle occupant support apparatus for installation in a vehicle seat, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of air cells including expandable chambers; and

a control module configured to connect to and operate only a limited number of air cells selected from the plurality of air cells, the control module having an input connectable to a fluid supply system, and including a limited number of outputs corresponding to the limited number of air cells and connecting respective ones of the limited number of air cells to the fluid supply system via the control module, thereby allowing the plurality of air cells to be conformed to any one of a number of different vehicle types by connecting to the limited number of outputs only those cells selected from the plurality of air cells as being appropriate or intended for use in a given vehicle type.

Claim 2 (previously amended). A vehicle occupant support apparatus for installation in a vehicle seat, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of air cells including expandable chambers; and

a control module for connecting air cells of the plurality of air cells to a fluid supply system and including a controller, a pump, and a wiring harness connected to the controller; the controller being selected from among a plurality of different function controllers configured to operate the occupant support apparatus according to different respective user preferences.

Claim 3 (previously amended). The vehicle occupant support apparatus of either claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the control module is programmed to have target pressures attained by using a programmed time of inflation or deflation of the expandable chambers as established by desired program sequences of operation by the control module.

Claim 4 (inadvertently omitted from original filing).

Claim 5 (previously amended). The vehicle occupant support apparatus of claim 3 wherein the valves are provided and the control module is programmed to have a programmed time of inflation or deflation established by sequentially activating the valves individually and energizing the pump for predetermined periods, and varying the number and location of the expandable chambers pressurized producing localized pressures exerted on a supported member.

Claim 6 (previously amended). The vehicle occupant support apparatus of claim 1 including a pressure source and an exhaust system configured to provide a pneumatically controlled support surface for the seating or body support system and wherein the massage movement includes a sequence of inflate and deflate between the respective expandable chambers so as to provide concentrated massage while maintaining a directional movement of the expandable chambers producing the massage action.

Claim 7 (previously amended). The vehicle occupant support apparatus of claim 6 including providing the expandable chambers as a series of expandable chambers and providing more than one user selected massage type and a preprogrammed manner of individual expandable chamber inflation and deflation to produce either a pulse type control of individual expandable chambers in both inflate and deflate steps through the series of expandable chambers so as to produce the aforesaid concentrated massage action.

Claim 8 (previously amended). The vehicle occupant support apparatus of claim 1 further including an inflate switch and a deflate switch and wherein the control sequence is initiated by signals from the inflate and deflate switches to the controller and wherein a manual inflate or deflate control is established by inputting the controller with input signals from manual operation of the inflate or deflate switches and

wherein the controller is preprogrammed to provide a timed inflate and exhaust of the expandable chambers.

Claim 9 (previously amended). The vehicle occupant support apparatus of claim 1 including a lower lumbar expandable chamber, an upper lumbar expandable chamber and a middle expandable chamber and wherein the pressure source and exhaust system are controlled by an automatic controller controlled sequence of massage in which the sequence includes fully inflating the lower lumbar expandable chamber; then transferring the air from such lower lumbar expandable chamber to the upper lumbar expandable chamber and then to the middle or third expandable chamber and following such inflation deflating each of the multiple expandable chambers from the upper expandable chamber down to the lower expandable chamber and repeating the aforesaid automatic massage for a timed period.

Claim 10 (previously amended). The vehicle occupant support apparatus of claim 9 wherein the switches are configured to stop the automatic massage action when depressed for a predetermined period of time.

Claim 11 (previously amended). The vehicle occupant support apparatus of claim 1 further including sensors and other switches and a controller operative in response to multiple input signals including one or more of an occupant detection condition; a temperature condition; system power-up; on-off switch and a system override switch.

Claim 12 (previously amended). The vehicle occupant support apparatus of claim 1 further including a pressurized manifold; dual valves disposed between the pressurized manifold and the one or more expandable chambers and configured to control air flow from a supply manifold or to exhaust the one or more expandable chambers.

Claim 13 (previously amended). The vehicle occupant support apparatus of claim 1 wherein the pressure source includes a pump supplying the manifold; and the pump being operable during exhaust from the one or more expandable chambers to back pressure the manifold.

Claim 14 (previously amended). The vehicle occupant support apparatus of claim 12 including at least first second and third expandable chambers; the controller being configured to provide a massage sequence including deflating all of the expandable chambers; connecting the pressurized manifold to the first expandable chamber; deflating the first expandable chamber while inflating the second expandable chamber; deflating the second expandable chamber while inflating the third expandable chamber; deflating the third expandable chamber while inflating the second expandable chamber and deflating the second expandable chamber; repeating the aforesaid massage sequence.

Claim 15 (previously amended). The vehicle occupant support apparatus of claim 12 including at least first second and third expandable chambers; the controller being configured to provide a massage sequence including deflating all of the expandable chambers; connecting the pressurized manifold to the first expandable chamber to inflate the first expandable chamber; deflating the first expandable chamber while inflating the second expandable chamber; deflating the second expandable chamber while inflating the third expandable chamber; deflating the third expandable chamber and repeating the aforesaid massage sequence.

Claim 16 (previously amended). The vehicle occupant support apparatus of claim 1 wherein:

the control module includes a controller and a pump; and

the occupant support apparatus includes hoses connected at one end to respective individual expandable chambers of the air cells and connectable at respective opposite ends to the control module.

Claim 17 (previously amended). A method for customizing a vehicle occupant support apparatus to suit a particular vehicle application, the method including the steps of:

providing a vehicle occupant support apparatus including a plurality of air cells including expandable chambers configured to be carried by a vehicle seat, a controller connected to the air cells, and a fluid supply system connectable to the air cells through the controller;

selecting from among the air cells, those air cells suited to a desired vehicle seat application; and

disconnecting all but the selected air cells from the controller.

Claim 18 (previously amended). A method for customizing a vehicle occupant support apparatus to suit a particular vehicle application, the method including the steps of:

providing a vehicle occupant support apparatus including a plurality of air cells including expandable chambers configured to be carried by a vehicle seat, a controller connectable to the air cells, and a fluid supply system connectable to the air cells through the controller;

selecting from among the air cells, those air cells suited to a desired vehicle application; and

connecting the selected air cells to the controller.